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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE SECOND PART OF ITS THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Tae Hun YOO (Republic of Korea)

Addendum

COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Revised System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development

1. At its 24th and 25th meetings, on 9 and 12 September 1994, the Committee considered the Secretary-General's report on the revised System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (E/AC.51/1994/7), structured around six priority areas, namely human resource development and capacity-building; food, agriculture and agro-based industries; diversification of African economies; mobilization of external and domestic resources; growth, equity and sustainable development; and regional cooperation and integration.

General

2. The Committee was informed about the coordinated efforts that had led to the elaboration of the revised System-wide Plan. It considered that the collaboration that had taken place between the organizations of the United Nations system should be extended to African Governments, which were better placed to assess the problems and the actual needs of their countries. That collaboration should further be used for the coherent implementation of the Plan.

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Discussion

3. Most delegations considered the revised System-wide Plan an improvement over the initial version.

4. Most delegations appreciated the link between the priorities of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the six priority areas proposed in the revised System-wide Plan and expressed the view that the Plan could serve as a valuable instrument of coordination within the United Nations system.

5. The same delegations underscored the importance of sustainable development as defined in the Tokyo Declaration adopted by the Tokyo International Conference on African Development held on 5 and 6 October 1993 and stressed the need for sustained efforts by both African countries and their development partners.

6. A number of delegations suggested that the concept of equity introduced in paragraph 7 of the System-wide Plan should be broadened to incorporate external elements such as the deterioration of terms of trade, the fall in commodity prices, the heavy, persistent and ever-increasing indebtedness of African countries, etc. Those delegations underlined the need for the System-wide Plan to reinforce coordination with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/World Trade Organization (WTO) on matters related to the fluctuations in prices of commodities on international markets, given the vital importance of primary products for the development of Africa.

7. A number of delegations indicated that, without proper resource allocation, it would be difficult to implement the System-wide Plan. In stressing the need for additional resources, some delegations stated that listing available resources by country or region would facilitate the monitoring of the flow of resources to Africa through the United Nations system.

8. A number of delegations emphasized the link between resource mobilization and Africa's debt burden and called for more far-reaching action to alleviate that burden. In that connection, attention was called to the outcome of the recent Ministerial Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries on Debt and Development in Jakarta and the wish expressed that attention be drawn to that vital issue in future meetings of other regional and international bodies. Furthermore, some delegations underscored the necessity and urgency for the United Nations to consider as a priority programme the mobilization of external and internal financial resources and debt alleviation for the development of African countries.

9. A number of delegations felt that the issue of African debt addressed in the Plan as a subprogramme should have been treated as one of the major priority programmes with an appropriate title and urged that that should be taken into consideration in the course of implementation and during the review of the System-wide Plan by the Committee in 1997.

10. Referring to an environment conducive to African economic recovery and development, a number of delegations pointed out the impact of certain economic policies and/or strategies of developed countries on African economies.

11. A number of delegations observed that, as regards the causes of the overall poor economic performance, the emphasis in the Plan was too much focused on external factors. According to those delegations, internal factors played an important role as well.

12. A number of delegations questioned the validity of the Plan, highlighting the fact that it dealt with Africa on a more regional level instead of being country-specific.

13. A number of delegations insisted on the end-result of the System-wide Plan, which was to lead African countries to recovery and development and stressed the need to create conditions that encouraged political stability and enhanced human rights, which in turn would facilitate economic development.

14. A number of delegations expressed the view that the System-wide Plan of Action must be implemented according to the national priorities, policies and legislation of African Governments. They also expressed the opinion that the implementation of the Plan should not imply any conditionality for African Governments and that its results should contribute to the economic and social development of African countries according to their priorities.

15. A number of delegations urged the United Nations system to assist African countries in their interactions and negotiations with various forums and international financial institutions, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, together with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Economic Commission for Africa and other organizations concerned, should devise a course of action for providing that crucial assistance.

Conclusion and recommendations

16. The Committee took note with appreciation of the revised System-wide Plan of Action, and endorsed the focus on six priority programmes linked to the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The Committee called upon the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to take all necessary steps for the effective implementation of the Plan in close cooperation with African Governments.

17. The Committee underlined the importance of inter-university cooperation, especially in research and training, to promote creativity, quality and innovation. In that respect and on the understanding that the United Nations University would be invited to collaborate in the subprogramme on higher education, the Committee stressed the need for cooperation with that organ. The Committee also stressed the importance of distance-learning and emphasized that science and technology transfer should not be overlooked.